

ASSASSINATION NIGHT - 11 APRIL 7, LINCOLN
DEPSS

DEANER 29

11 APRIL 1967

COTTON

Curios and Relics

Clothing

Assassination Clothing

Mary Lincoln's Dress

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

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ELVILLE

The day **LINCOLN** was shot

JIM BISHOP

*With illustrations selected and
arranged by Stefan Lorant*

WEIDENFELD AND NICOLSON
7 CORK STREET LONDON W1

1955

HOT 7 P.M.
e House doorman.

8 P.M.

THE NIGHT HOURS

163

8 P.M.

IT WAS 8.05 P.M. when Mrs Lincoln, in a pretty bonnet with tiny pink flowers, and low-necked white dress, stood in the office doorway pulling on gloves and said:

'Would you have us be late?'

The President fumbled for his watch, and remembered that he had asked Colfax to wait outside. He asked Ashmun if he would mind coming back again in the morning, when he would have plenty of time. Lincoln had momentarily offended a friend and now he wanted to lean over backward to swallow the honest words he had uttered.

Ashmun said that he would have time in the morning. The President took a card from his vest pocket and wrote on it in a large, shaky hand:

Allow Mr Ashmun
& friend to come in
at 9 A.M. to mor
row

A. Lincoln
April 14, 1865

He got up, excused himself, got his silk hat, brushed his hair with his hand, and, with Congressman Ashmun, joined Colfax, Mrs Lincoln and Noah Brooks on the front porch. In a last-minute after-thought, he told Colfax that Senator Sumner had a gavel which the Confederate Congress had used and which Sumner wanted to present to Mr Stanton. 'I insisted then that he must turn it over to you,' Lincoln said. 'You tell him for me to hand it over.'

His mind was still far from the theatre. He watched the footman help Mrs Lincoln into the closed coach and he said to the assemblage: 'Grant thinks we can reduce the cost of the army establishment at least half a million a day, which, with the reduction of expenditures of our navy, will soon bring down our national debt to something like decent proportions, and bring our national paper up to par, or nearly so, with gold—at least, so they think.'

BEHIND THE SCENES
THIRTY YEARS A SLAVE
AND FOUR YEARS IN THE WHITE HOUSE

Elizabeth Keckley



ARNO PRESS and THE NEW YORK TIMES
NEW YORK 1968

in a few days, and he never even so much as inquired after their welfare. Mrs. Lincoln firmly believes that Mr. Johnson was concerned in the assassination plot.

In packing, Mrs. Lincoln gave away everything intimately connected with the President, as she said that she could not bear to be reminded of the past. The articles were given to those who were regarded as the warmest of Mr. Lincoln's admirers. All of the presents passed through my hands. The dress that Mrs. Lincoln wore on the night of the assassination was given to Mrs. Slade, the wife of an old and faithful messenger. The cloak, stained with the President's blood, was given to me, as also was the bonnet worn on the same memorable night. Afterwards I received the comb and brush that Mr. Lincoln used during his residence at the White House. With this same comb and brush I had often combed his head. When almost ready to go down to a reception, he would turn to me with a quizzical

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MARY TODD
LINCOLN

A B I O G R A P H Y

JEAN H. BAKER



W. W. N O R T O N & C O M P A N Y

N E W Y O R K

L O N D O N

1987

the guests who sometimes shared their carriage. Later she remembered they talked of the "miserable time" they had had during the war. Lincoln had said they must be more cheerful. They discussed their future: where they might live and whether they might travel. After their carriage ride and supper they prepared for the theater, she in her pretty bonnet and a small-patterned blue dress, he by brushing his hand through his stubborn hair and picking up his silk hat.⁸¹

The presidential party arrived late and took their places amid the show-stopping applause of nearly 1,700 theatergoers and the orchestra's "Hail to the Chief." The Lincolns had been in their seats for an hour and a half when Mary Lincoln turned to her husband, slipped her hand in his, and leaned toward him to ask what Clara Harris and the major would think of her hanging on to him like this. Then, in that unearthly moment, John Wilkes Booth showed his pass to the guard stationed at the bottom of the stairs, walked along the back of the row of boxes to the anteroom of the presidential box, looked through the sight he had earlier bored, opened the inner door to the box, and shot Abraham Lincoln in the back of the head. In the pandemonium that followed, everyone remembered Mary Lincoln's moans and screams and her singular cry. "Oh, my God, and have I given my husband to die?"⁸²

October 27, 1998

I spoke with Michael Maione, historian of Ford's Theatre, to ask for a description of Mary Todd Lincoln's dress that she wore on the night of the assassination. Michael stated that no one knows for sure what the dress looked like or what happened to it.

Cindy VanHorn
Registrar & Library Assistant
The Lincoln Museum

